The Riddle of Steel – **Melee Combat Walkthrough**

A. Check for Surprise

- **Check Reflex versus TN (for TN See Below);**
  - **Failure:** no action can be taken until next round – proceed to step 1.
  - **Success:** defend as normal —proceed to step b

Checking for Surprise	
Situation	***TN***
Purposely standing with no stance—inviting attack	5
Aware of Opponent, but victim of a cheap shot	7
Unsuspecting or inattentive	10
Blindsided!	13

B. Declare Stance

- **At the start of a bout, or after a pause, declare stance out loud (Lower Reflex declares first)**

Stance Modifiers		
Stance	***Attack (Red Die)***	***Defend (White Die)***
Aggressive	+2 CP	-2 CP
Defensive	-2 CP	+2 CP
Neutral	No modifier	No modifier

C. Initiative - Establish Aggressor and Defender

- **Either combatant may taunt (Wit/Ridicule versus opponent's Will Power (WP); Ridicule default=10)**
  - If both incite a taunt, then roll a contest of Wit/Ridicule
  - Success forces a red/white with the loser as the aggressor
- **Take a red and white die into your hands. Each combatant drops one of the dice on the table**
  - Red: indicates aggression
  - White: indicates defense
  - **Red/White**: Aggressor takes initiative; go to Step 3
  - **Red/Red:** a tie-breaker is required
    - Both declare their attacks in order of Reflex (low to high)
    - Both roll Reflex against their own ATN, apply Weapon Length penalties as normal
    - In the case of a tie, compare actual Reflex scores. Thrusts provide a +1 Reflex modifier over swings and bashes.
    - If this is still a tie then the blows are simultaneous (whoever has the most successes takes initiative)
    - Go to Step 4 but perform only a single exchange of blows, then go to Step D
  - **White/White:** The combatants circle each other; go to step A.

D. Start of the Combat Round - Blood Loss Check

- **If Blood Loss (BL) > Toughness (TN), make a blood loss check**
  - Successfully roll Endurance (EN) versus Blood Loss (BL) or lose one point of Health (HT)
    - **HT 1:** all dice pools are halved
    - **HT 0:** combatant unconscious and dying

1. Call out the Number of the Round and Apply Fatigue

- **-1 CP per (2 x Endurance) rounds of fighting**
  - This number is further reduced by the total CP penalty for armor, shield, and encumbrance

2. Dice Pool Refresh

- **All dice pools fill**
  - Apply any active Spiritual Attributes (SA's)
  - Deduct spillover shock from the Combat Pool (CP) of the injured combatant, unless Pain is greater
  - Deduct Pain from all dice pools
  - Apply Situation Modifiers (see below)

Situation Modifiers	
Situation	***Modifier***
Higher Footing	+2CP
Near Darkness (dusk)	Reduce all pools by 1
Night (Moonlit)	Reduce all pools by ¼
Pitch Darkness	Reduce all pools by ½
Knocked Down	Reduce CP by 1/2

- **Both combatants make Terrain Rolls for facing multiple opponents and difficult terrain (At GM's discretion)**
  - Any number of dice are drawn from each player's Combat Pool and are opposed by a TN set by the GM

3. Exchange of Blows

- **Defender designates any favoring dice (hidden)**
- **Aggressor declares attack**
  - Add/subtract stance modifiers to the CP (1st exchange or after pause only)
  - Declare any Terrain Roll actions (such as cinematic maneuvers) and CP dice spent
  - Declare Maneuver, target zone and number of dice
  - Pay the maneuver activation cost (if any) from the Combat Pool
  - Pay the target zone penalty from the maneuver dice
  - Check range of combatants and pay any penalties from the maneuver dice
    - -1 CP per range step for a short weapon to attack outside of its range
    - -1 CP per range step for a long weapon to attack inside its range

Weapon Reach	
Reach	***Sample Weapons***
Hand	Fists, daggers, grappling
Short	Hatchets, short swords, long knives
Medium	Arming swords, flails
Long	Great swords, bastard swords, spears
Very Long	Long spears, pole arms
Extremely Long	Pikes, lances

- **Defender declares defense or attack**
  - Add/subtract stance modifiers to CP (1st exchange or after pause only)
  - Reveal any favoring dice (If the attacker targeted a favored zone, the defender gets twice the dice allocated to that zone as bonus dice this exchange)
  - Declare any Terrain Roll actions (such as cinematic maneuvers) and CP spent
  - Declare Maneuver and number of dice
  - P ay the maneuver activation cost (if any) from the Combat Pool
  - Check range of combatants as above
    - -1 CP per range step for a long weapon to defend inside its range
    - Short weapons defending against longer weapons do not incur a penalty

Making a Terrain Roll
The player declares that his Combatant wants to do something other than attack, defend or parry that is not otherwise covered by a combat maneuver. The GM assigns a Target Number (TN) for the attempt, and the player removes as many dice as he likes from his Combat Pool (CP), rolling them against that TN. As long as he achieves at least one success, he succeeds. In some cases, a terrain roll may be opposed by another combatant.

Terrain Roll - Facing Multiple Opponents		
The number of opponents is determined by a terrain roll versus a TN as shown below. Success=face one; fail=face two; botch=face three		
Number of Opponents	***TN***	
	Hurried (Regular)	*Sprinting (+2 to armor penalty for purpose of determining fatigue only)*
2	6	5
3-5	8	6
6-9	9	7
10+	10	8

Terrain Roll - Difficult Terrain		
Terrain	***TN***	
	Normal/ Defending	*Hurried/ Attacking*
Narrow (ledges, walls, roofs)	3	5
Swampy or rocky	4	6
Ice / Slippery	6	8
Tight spaces (to not get stuck)	4	5
Limited footwork	5	6
Pressing combat	4	3

Terrain Roll - Drawing Weapons	
Drawing a weapon during combat takes a single exchange (during which the combatant can usually do little except parry or evade). After the weapon has been drawn, the current CP is retained until the end of the round. The new weapon and proficiency are taken into account with the CP refresh at the start of the next round.	
Weapon Location	***TN***
Small weapon (i.e. dagger) in belt or sheath	6
Larger weapon (i.e. sword) in belt or sheath	7
Small weapon in boot	7
Medium or shorter weapon in back sheath	8
Long weapon in back sheath	9
Weapon strapped to back	--

Terrain Roll - Cinematic Actions	
Start with base TN or opposed roll depending on circumstances. If an obvious number cannot be determined, start with a base of 4-5.	
Terrain	***TN***
Relatively Straightforward (e.g. sliding down a rope)	5
Tricky (e.g. sliding down a rope in heavy breeze)	6
(e.g. sliding down a rope in heavy breeze; holding a weapon in one hand)	8
Very Difficult (e.g. sliding down a rope in a heavy breeze while parrying an attack)	5
Heroic (e.g. sliding down a rope in a heavy breeze while fending off multiple attacks)	6

Knocked Down and Standing Up
While on the ground, combatants may attack. Defense is limited to blocks, parries and evasions. To stand up, roll the combatant's *Knockdown* attribute against TN8 if acting defensively, or TN9 if acting aggressively (attacking at the same time). With at least one success, the combatant has gotten to his feet and his CP will refresh normally at the start of the next round.

Blocking an Attack to the Lower Legs
It is awkward to maneuver the shield to block attacks at the lower legs. For this reason, the defender incurs a -1CP penalty when using small and medium shields to block an attack at zone 1/8

- **Attacker declares feint (if desired)**
  - Declare the new location for the attack (within two areas of original)
  - Add any number of dice to the attack, paying an activation cost of one for each die added
- **Roll the dice**
  - Both combatants roll simultaneously and count all successes by comparing the results to the Attack Target Number (ATN) or the Defense Target Number (DTN) listed for the weapon, shield or maneuver
  - Check for botched rolls: If either combatant fails their maneuver roll (no successes), and has two or more 1's on their dice, they have botched their roll
    - For attacks, the combatant looses ½ of the dice spent on the maneuver from their combat pool on the next exchange
    - The GM may determine various results for a botched roll (dropped weapons, falls, etc.) based on the situation and maneuvers
  - **If the attacker has at least one margin of success over the defender**, the attack succeeds
    - Go to step 5 – Resolve Damage
  - **If the defender has at least one margin of success over the attacker**, the defense succeeds
    - Defender takes initiative
    - If this is the first half of the round (and either combatant has dice remaining in his CP), go to Step 4 and determine the results of the second exchange of blows
    - If this is the second exchange of blows, go to Step 1 to start a new round
    - If the defender successfully completed a Full Evasion, go to Step B
  - **If the combatants tie**, the attack was not successful but the attacker retains initiative
    - A tie implies that the defender just barely avoided the strike, and is still recovering from the momentum of the blow which was blocked, parried or dodged
    - If this is the first half of the round and either combatant has dice remaining in his Combat Pool (CP), go to Step 4 and determine the results of the second exchange of blows
    - If this is the second exchange of blows or if neither combatant has any dice remaining in his Combat Pool (CP), go to Step 1 to start a new round

4. Resolve Damage

- **Determine Wounds**
  - Calculate attacker's strength bonus**:** Attacker's STR – Opponents Toughness; not less than zero
  - Calculate Potential Damage: Attacker's strength bonus + Weapon Damage Rating (DR) + Margin of Success
  - Find the appropriate damage table based on target zone and attack type
  - Roll 1d6 to determine exact location
  - Subtract the opponent's Armor Value (AV) for the location of the attack from the Potential Damage; this is the Wound Level
  - Reference the appropriate Wound Level column in the damage table
  - Level 4 or 5 wounds may describe imminent or instant death; these end combat

Determining Wound Level
Attacker's Strength – Defender's Toughness (min 0)
+ Weapon Damage Rating
+ Attacker's Margin of Success
– Defender's Armor Value
= Wound Level

- **Tally Blood Loss and Pain**
  - If this area was wounded previously in this bout, apply the worst of the Pain and Blood Loss ratings (Pain and Blood Loss are not cumulative within a single area)
- **Apply Shock**
  - If this area was wounded previously, use the higher of the old shock value or the new shock value
  - Subtract any shock from pending maneuver dice (such as in a red-red simultaneous attack where one strike is resolved before the other)
  - Subtract any remaining shock from the unallocated reserve pool; make note of any spillover shock (to be applied at the beginning of the next round)
- **Resolve any *drop* results indicated on the damage table**
  - Roll knockdown versus TN8
    - Any penalties or bonuses on the knockdown modify the knockdown die pool, rather than the TN
  - Failure = dropped item
    - In order to pick up a dropped item in combat, make a terrain roll versus TN9 (may be made while evading, blocking or parrying, but not while attacking)
  - Botched roll = flown out of the victim's hand
    - Terrain roll versus TN13 to retrieve item
- **Resolve any *knockdown* tests indicated on the damage table**
  - Roll the victim's *Knockdown* attribute as a die pool against TN8
  - Any penalties or bonuses on the knockdown modify the *Knockdown* pool, rather than the TN
  - If the victim is knocked down, reduce CP to 1/3 of its usual maximum (or whatever is left as is if the current total is less than this)
- **Resolve any *knockout* tests indicated on the damage table**
  - Roll knockout versus TN7
  - If the roll succeeds: no effect
  - If the roll fails: 1d10 seconds (1d10x10 rounds) unconsciousness
  - If the roll is a botch: 1d10x10 minutes unconsciousness

Resolving Damage Effects		
Potential Result	***Attribute to Roll***	***TN***
Drop	*Knockdown*	8
Knockdown	*Knockdown*	8
Knockout	*Knockout*	7

- **Complete the Exchange**
  - The successful attacker retains or takes initiative
  - Make note of any adjustments to weapon range based on the successful attack (i.e. a short weapon closing range)
  - If this is the first half of the round (and either combatant has dice remaining in his CP), go to Step 4 and determine the results of the second exchange of blows
  - If this is the second exchange of blows, go to Step 1 to start a new round